

Nos. 2091, 2100. ♀ ad. Bitye, River Ja, Nov. 24, 1906.
Ovary small.

[A somewhat more accurate description of this bird's nest may now be added to the few words given before ('Ibis,' 1905, p. 98). The fine fibres used for the upper part and inside of the nest are taken from the dry stems of plants, and are not grass. The inside diameter of the nest at the top is from 60 to 70 mm., the fabric being not quite circular. The eggs are two or three in number, about 24×17 mm. in size, of a white ground-colour, which shews only at the small end, the rest being thickly speckled with brown, while some pale bluish speckles are intermixed. This bird is often seen in the Zima Country.—G. L. B.]

204. *PYCNONOTUS VIRIDESCENTIOR.*

Pycnonotus viridescentior Sharpe, Ibis, 1904, p. 638.

No. 1646. ♂ ad. River Ja, April 2, 1906.

Nos. 1285, 1355. ♀; 1293. ♂ ad. River Ja, Jan. 10-14, 1906. Ovaries and testes rather small.

No. 1454. ♀ ad. River Ja, Feb. 23, 1906. Eggs forming.

No. 1646. ♂ ad. River Ja, April 2, 1906. Testes rather large.

[To be continued.]

XXII.—*Field-Notes on the Columba unicincta of Cassin.*

By DAVID SETH-SMITH, M.B.O.U.

As I believe that very few specimens of the African Pigeon (*Columba unicincta**) are known in collections, and that little or nothing has been recorded of its habits in the wild state, some notes sent home by my brother, L. M. Seth-Smith, from Uganda may be worth publishing. His letter, dated February 14, 1907, is written from the Budongo Forest, near Masindi. He says:—"You may like to have a few notes about *Columba unicincta*, which I have lately

* For a description of *Columba unicincta*, see Cassin, Pr. Ac. Nat. Sc. Philad. 1859, p. 143, which is reprinted in B.M. Cat. Birds, vol. xxi. p. 243.

had a chance of seeing in some numbers. I shot my first specimen at Entebbe two years ago; it was feeding along with some Green Pigeons (*Vinago calva*). I did not see the bird at the time, but shooting at a Green Pigeon, was lucky enough to bring down an example of this species as well. You identified it as *Columba unicincta* and told me to look out for more. I never saw another specimen in that locality, although I was frequently shooting over the same ground, and I came to the conclusion that it was a forest species (there was much forest in the neighbourhood), and only occasionally came into the open country on the outskirts of the forest.

“On February 14th of the present year I again came across this bird, and had a repetition of my first introduction to it. I was travelling along a native track some eight miles west of Masindi when I saw some Green Pigeons fly from a tree just ahead of me, and thinking it probable that some still remained in the tree, took my gun and walked up to the tree and carefully looked for them. At first I could see none, but after straining my eyes for some seconds I observed a movement amongst the leaves and shot, when down fell my second specimen of *C. unicincta*. In this case again there was a strip of forest not far away. A few days later I camped at the edge of the Budongo Forest, some fifteen miles west of Masindi, and here, going out early one morning, I noticed several of these birds flying from the forest to feed—in fact, they appeared to be quite common, feeding morning and evening on the outskirts of the forest on the same trees that the Green Pigeons frequented. Frequently both species feed together. They emerge from the forest soon after dawn, and again at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, flying very high, almost always quite out of range, and alighting on the top of the highest tree in the vicinity of their feeding-ground. They seem to prefer to pitch on a leafless tree, from which they can survey the country round before coming down to the lower trees on which they feed. I shot most of my specimens by waiting in hiding under some high leafless tree.

“Their food, at this time of the year at least, consists entirely of the berries of a tree called by the natives ‘Musasa,’ a very common tree throughout the Protectorate. I have never seen these birds in flocks; they fly in twos and threes.

“I moved to another point on the outskirts of the forest, where, however, I only camped for one day. Here I found a number of Mikindu palms, and again met with *C. uniceincta*. I asked the natives where they nested and they said ‘in the Mikindus,’ which I think very probable: I hope to verify the fact soon. I have not heard the note of this species yet.

“The natives say that these birds do not come to the shambas to eat the corn, and as very few of the inhabitants seem to know them, I think this is most probable, because if they ate the crops all the natives would recognise them well enough. I have so far found nothing but berries in the crops of those that I have examined.”

My brother has sent home five very good specimens in addition to the one which I received from him in 1905 (see Bull. B. O. C. vol. xv. p. 75). Four of these, two males and two females, are adults, while the fifth, shot in the Budongo Forest on Feb. 22, 1907, is an immature male just commencing to assume the adult plumage. The immature plumage of this species has never, I believe, been described, so the specimen is of considerable interest. It has, however, partially assumed the adult dress; nevertheless, from the juvenile feathers that still remain, we may form a good idea of the immature stage.

The general colour is grey, striped and mottled with black, chestnut, and white. The top of the head has each feather minutely striped with blackish and tipped with rufous brown or whitish; the feathers of the nape and mantle have towards the tip a narrow line of blackish fringed with white; the rump and upper tail-coverts are grey, fringed with white, the lesser wing-coverts becoming black towards the tip and being broadly tipped with chestnut-brown; the primary-coverts are the same, but with a narrow fringe of white in addition to the chestnut; the primaries and secondaries are dark blackish

grey as in the adults, but fringed at the tips with white; the tail is as in the adult, but narrowly fringed with white. The breast is pale buff, striped with blackish; the flanks are grey, fringed with buffish white. "Naked skin round eye grey, inclining to purplish."

In the adult specimens the only sexual difference that I can find is in the colour of the breast. In the male this is bright vinaceous, while it is much duller and has a leaden-blue tinge in the female.

XXIII.—*Notes on the Red-tailed Bush-Lark* (*Mirafr erythroptgia*) *. By A. L. BUTLER, Superintendent of Game-Preservation, Sudan.

ON a recent journey in the Bahr-el-Ghazal Province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan I saw a great deal of this little-known Lark, and venture to offer some observations on it.

The Red-tailed Bush-Lark is quite a common bird along the Pongo River, on open patches in the forest-country between the Pongo and Chak Chak, on the plains along the Chell River, and on the grassy "khors" which intersect the forest between Chak Chak and Dem Zubeir.

I brought back the following specimens:—

- a. ♂ (breeding). 3.2.07. 20 miles E. of the Pongo.
- b. ♂ (apparently breeding). 5.2.07. Pongo River.
- c. ♂ (not breeding). 5.2.07. Pongo River.
- d. ♂ " 5.2.07. " "
- e. ♂ " 5.2.07. " "

I first met with the species on February 2nd, 1907, while on the march between Kuanga's village and the Pongo, when my attention was attracted by a dark-coloured Lark-like bird which rose from the top of one of the trees scattered over the plain, soared singing into the air for forty or fifty yards, and after a minute or two descended again to the perch from which it started.

Through glasses I watched it repeat this performance

* *Alauda erythroptgia* Strickl.; Sharpe, Cat. B. xiii. p. 619.